

Representative
MARK SCHOESLER

Senator
LARRY SHEAHAN

Representative
DON COX



Legislative Issues '99

Serving Asotin, Whitman, Adams and south Spokane counties.

• 56th Legislature Convenes in Olympia •

Dear Friends,

The 1999 legislative session has brought significant change for the people of the Ninth District. It also provides tremendous opportunities to continue the reforms we've worked for to improve the way government operates and treats its citizens.

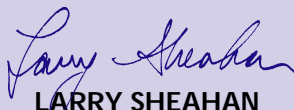
- ✓ **Larry Sheahan was appointed to the Senate to replace Gene Prince, who left to become chairman of the state Liquor Control Board.**
- ✓ **Don Cox, who recently retired as superintendent of the Colfax School District, was elected to succeed Larry in the House by county commissioners in the district.**
- ✓ **Mark Schoesler was chosen by his colleagues to join the House leadership team as Republican Whip.**


Together, we will be working to keep providing our constituents with the strongest voice and most effective representation possible. We are dedicated to listening to your concerns, responding to your needs and serving the best interests of our area.

We face new challenges this year with both power and responsibility in Olympia divided between Republicans and Democrats. For only the second time in Washington history, the state House of Representatives has an equal number of members from each party — 49 apiece. Meanwhile, there is a slim Democrat majority in the state Senate. And the Legislature must not only seek out consensus and cooperation to be productive in these unique circumstances — we must also find ways to work with the governor on many critical issues.

Also included in this newsletter is a short questionnaire on a number of issues that we have found to be of interest to people in the 9th District. Your responses will help guide us in the many decisions that we will make during our scheduled 105 days in Olympia.


MARK SCHOESLER
State Representative


LARRY SHEAHAN
State Senator


DON COX
State Representative



Don Cox, Larry Sheahan and Mark Schoesler are committed to giving Ninth District residents the strongest possible voice in the Legislature. They are dedicated to working together on the critical issues that affect our region and the entire state.

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Ensuring quality education for all schools

The highest budget priority must be providing the best possible education — and educational opportunities — for our children. We will work to make certain funding for our rural schools, including levy equalization, is fair and equitable. Our priority will be to take care of smaller, rural school districts in the budget process.

While we will increase funding for schools and provide a pay increase for teachers, the challenge of improving public education is about far more than money. This means focusing on the **quality** of education — with the highest standards of teaching and higher expectations for academic performance.

We will work to establish a program to hold schools **accountable** for meeting rigorous standards of student achievement. And we will pursue a program of **teacher competency testing**. We want to at least begin with testing of new teachers to assure students and their parents that the teachers in the classroom are prepared and qualified to effectively teach our children the academic skills they must have to succeed in life.

Making schools safer

Another key to improving education is making schools safer for both students and teachers.

We must start by doing a better job of identifying — and dealing with — those individuals who threaten the security and well-being of others.

Students who bring dangerous weapons onto school grounds or otherwise pose a threat must be immediately removed, then be held by authorities and monitored or counseled to prevent the kind of tragedies we've seen in too many schools across the country.



Don Cox is the newest member of the Ninth District legislative team. As director of the Rural Education Center at WSU, a former Colfax School District superintendent and a career educator, Don will provide leadership on education issues. He will put his experience to work pursuing policies that improve support for schools in rural areas and smaller communities so that every child has access to the learning opportunities they need to survive and thrive in life.

We must give schools and educators the authority and ability to deal with those students whose disruptive or threatening behavior harms learning opportunities and creates problems for others.

★ CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATORS ★

Representative
MARK SCHOESLER
House Republican Whip

Committees:
• Agriculture and Ecology
• Capital Budget
• Rules

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schoesle_ma@leg.wa.gov

Senator
LARRY SHEAHAN

Committees:
• Higher Education, *ranking Republican*
• Human Services and Corrections
• State and Local Government
• Transportation

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Representative
DON COX

Committees:
• Education
• Finance
• Judiciary

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TOLL-FREE LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE: 1-800-562-6000

Legislative Issues '99

Salmon listing will hit home

Another chapter is about to unfold in the Northwest's developing salmon crisis. In March, we expect that Puget Sound chinook (*king*) salmon will be listed as either endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (*ESA*). The king is one of a growing number of salmon species that have deteriorated dramatically in recent years as a result of over-fishing, destruction of spawning habitat, and changing ocean conditions.

Unlike the spotted owl designation in 1990 that led to unprecedented cutbacks in logging that devastated our timber-dependent counties, an *ESA* listing of chinook would be felt by every community in Washington. The statewide impact could take the form of higher electrical rates, restrictions on land use and farming, timber harvests, water rights, and additional cutbacks in sport and commercial fishing.

The Legislature is at work building on the salmon recovery plan (*HB 2496*) that we passed in 1998. The governor has requested \$201 million from the Legislature to start helping local governments and private landowners protect and restore wild salmon habitats. About half of the spending would come from federal grants.

The proposal is a starting point toward a statewide plan of action that addresses the urgency of the crisis, but we're a long way from the end of the process. The next phase of the state's recovery plan must meet the approval of the National Marine Fisheries Service. It must be focused, credible and substantive to show that Washington is prepared and capable of managing and restoring salmon stocks without federal intervention and oversight.



Mark Schoesler is taking on new leadership responsibilities as the House Republican Whip. In this key role, Mark helps shape the legislative agenda and coordinate the action when bills come to the floor for debate.

Protecting taxpayers

We will continue our efforts to protect the taxpayers of Washington by controlling the growth of government, seeking greater efficiency and responsiveness in the delivery of public services, and increasing the accountability of government to the citizens of our state.

We can accomplish this by continuing our efforts to set sound priorities — seeking new and better ways to operate and serve the public — and by maintaining responsible budget policies.

Providing property tax relief

We intend to continue our efforts to provide meaningful reform and relief to homeowners.

One concern is the continuing rapid increase in property taxes in many communities — increases in excess of the reasonable limits established by voters when they adopted Referendum 47. We will work to strengthen that limit to provide greater relief to homeowners around the state.

And we intend to pursue an effective and workable approach to protecting homeowners from the big, unexpected spikes in property taxes that impose an unreasonable financial burden and threaten to tax too many people out of their homes.

Encouraging economic growth throughout Washington

Washington ranks second worst in the nation for disparity between urban and rural economies. The Puget Sound region and areas along the I-5 corridor are booming, but many rural communities have been left out of the picture. While state unemployment hovers at 4.9 percent, jobless rates in rural counties reach into the double digits. Many rural areas lack adequate infrastructure — water and sewer lines, electricity, access to high-tech hookups — which makes them less attractive to new businesses and less able to promote growth of existing businesses. Also, excessive land-

Listen in on the Legislature

All you need is a computer equipped with sound system and access to the Internet to listen to live programming of committee hearings and floor sessions during the 1999 session. This service is free and is provided by TWV, the nonprofit statewide public affairs television network, similar to C-SPAN at the national level. Just visit TWV's Web site at www.twv.org and tune in to the Legislature's deliberations. The software required — RealAudio — is also free and can be downloaded over the Internet from www.real.com in just a few minutes.



Representative
MARK SCHOESLER

Senator
LARRY SHEAHAN

Representative
DON COX

use and bureaucratic permitting regulations, along with unfunded government mandates, are especially hard on rural counties.

In finding out what works for rural counties, we discovered tax incentives designed to entice a single business or industry have not proven successful — nor have other policies that require rural counties to dance to Olympia's tune. The success of any rural economic development bill depends on the extent to which we allow local governments the flexibility to design their own initiatives.

Our legislative proposals, based on the input of rural officials and residents, include:

- *Set a definition for rural counties, based on population density, so we will know exactly which areas need help.*
- *Allow counties to keep more of their sales tax revenues for economic development.*
- *Provide rural counties with loans, grants and technical assistance.*
- *Streamline the water-right permitting process.*

Supporting Washington agriculture

Our agriculture industry is a vital source of income and employment in Washington and a key element of the state's economic vitality.

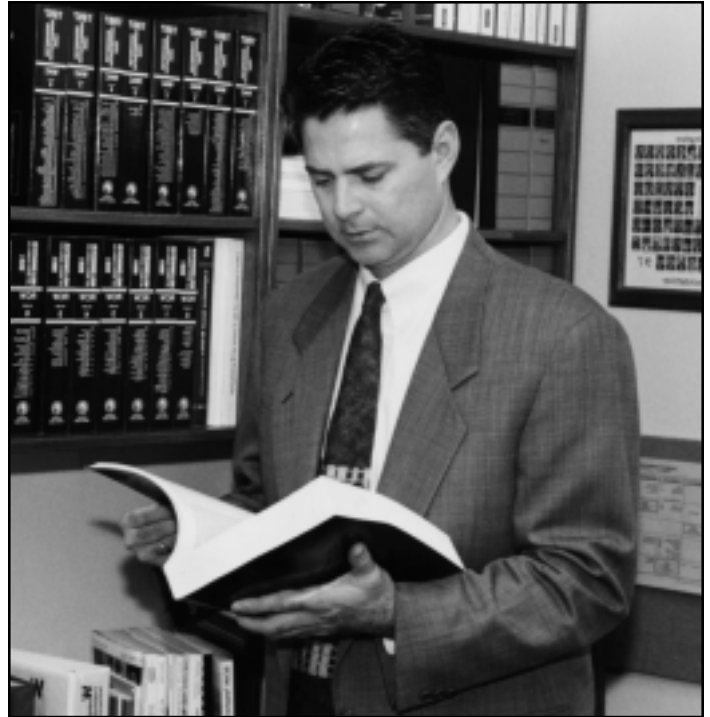
Among our priorities this session will be working to fund the safe-food initiative program at Washington State University, as well as continuing efforts to strengthen farming, improve the variety and uses of agricultural products, and to promote those commodities throughout the state and around the world.

Cracking down on prostitution

Prostitution is a major problem in Spokane. Cracking down on areas where prostitution occurs simply shifts the problem to other parts of the city. Larry is again proposing a bill which would impound the vehicles of the patrons of prostitutes. Many of those patrons use motor vehicles in order to obtain the services of prostitutes. Impounding vehicles will not only decrease the demand for prostitution services, it will eliminate traffic congestion and other concerns to neighborhoods and business areas caused by patrons cruising in motor vehicles in areas of high prostitution activity.

Encouraging affordable housing

The region's tremendous growth has sharply increased the demand for affordable single-family homes. The shortage of housing for the typical Washingtonian is a critical issue — not just in the Puget Sound area where even average-priced



As the Ninth District's new state senator, Larry Sheahan will continue to provide strong leadership on critical issues. Among the priorities Larry will continue to pursue are strengthening higher education, fighting crime and protecting the rights of law-abiding citizens, and supporting our agricultural community.

homes are completely out of reach for average wage-earners, but for people in every area of the state.

We will work this session to bring some sense to the restrictive regulations and other factors that are limiting the supply and availability of affordable housing and putting the American dream of home ownership out of reach for the average family.

GETTING RESULTS FOR OUR CONSTITUENTS

This newsletter covers just a few of the legislative priorities reflecting the most urgent challenges facing our region and the entire state. Republicans in the Washington Legislature are fully prepared to work with our Democrat counterparts to bridge partisan differences on the key issues that will come before us during the 105 days of the 1999 session.

9th District Constituent Survey

K-12 Education

1 What do you think would do the most to improve the quality of education in our state's public schools?

Voter 1 Voter 2

- _____ _____ Reduce administrative costs and redirect money and resources to the classroom
- _____ _____ Increase teacher salaries
- _____ _____ Stress the basics in school curriculum
- _____ _____ Place increased emphasis on computer and vocational skills
- _____ _____ Have more local control

2 Would you support competency testing of new teachers to ensure they are prepared and qualified?

Voter 1 Voter 2

- _____ _____ Yes
- _____ _____ No

3 In Washington, a school district must win a 60 percent "yes" vote to pass a school levy or bond. Would you support a constitutional amendment to allow a simple 50 percent majority to approve a levy or bond issue?

Voter 1 Voter 2

- _____ _____ Yes
- _____ _____ No

Firearms

4 Should the state pass legislation requiring personal firearms to be locked in storage when not in use?

Voter 1 Voter 2

- _____ _____ Yes
- _____ _____ No

RETURN ADDRESS

Name _____

Address _____

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Remove this page,
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Higher Education

5 We saved \$190 million over the past two years as a result of legislative reforms in the state's welfare system. Gov. Gary Locke wants to spend \$136 million of the savings for higher education. Do you support that proposal or should the savings be used for other purposes?

Voter 1 Voter 2

- _____ _____ Use it for higher education
- _____ _____ Use it for other purposes, such as _____
- _____ _____ Don't spend it, reduce the budget

Income tax

6 What is your opinion of a state income tax?

Voter 1 Voter 2

- _____ _____ Support
- _____ _____ Oppose

Dam breaching

7 Do you favor or oppose proposals to breach (alter or remove) the lower four Snake River dams to help revive declining salmon runs?

Voter 1 Voter 2

- _____ _____ Favor
- _____ _____ Oppose



Please send us a copy of the survey results.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____



Please
place
33¢
stamp
here

Senator LARRY SHEAHAN
Representatives DON COX and
MARK SCHOESLER
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, Washington 98504-0600



Our Goal: *Making Washington a better place to live.*

1994

1998

CRIME	27,127 reported violent crimes in a year.	23,922 reported violent crimes. 12% less
JOBS	6.4 percent unemployment.	4.6 percent unemployment. 289,000 more jobs
WELFARE	102,000 welfare cases.	80,000 welfare cases. 21% less
K-12 SCHOOLS	State funding \$4,367 per student. 13 percent of total K-12 spending goes to administrative costs.	State funding \$4,728 per student. 12 percent of total K-12 spending goes to administrative costs. 8% more
HIGHER ED	191,018 students enrolled in the public higher education system.	201,039 students enrolled in the public higher education system. 5.2% more
STATE SPENDING	\$67.25 general fund-state spending for every \$1,000 of personal income.	\$59.69 per \$1,000 of personal income. 13% less
STATE TAXES	\$66.60 general fund-state taxes for every \$1,000 of personal income.	\$58.23 per \$1,000 of personal income. 14% less
PERSONAL INCOME	\$21,562 real per-capita income.	\$24,325 real per-capita income. 12% more

A statistical comparison showing how our state has improved since 1994.

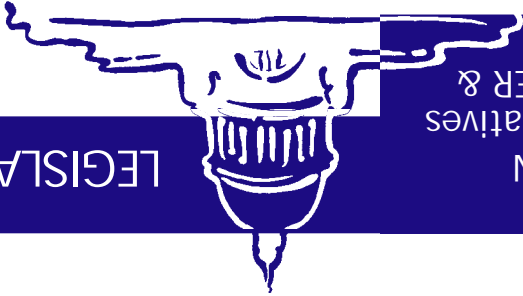
SOURCES: Washington State Data Book, Office of Financial Management • Washington Economic and Revenue Forecast, Office of the Forecast Council • State Flash Report — Selected Income Assistance Programs, DSHS • Legislative Budget Notes, Washington State Legislature • Office of Program Research, Washington House of Representatives • Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program.

NOTE: In some cases most recent data is from 1996 or 1997.

Don Cox joins the 9th District legislative team as our new state representative!

Olympia, Washington 98504-0600
P.O. Box 40600

State Senator
LARRY SHEAHAN
State Representatives
MARK SCHOESLER &
DON COX



Plus Ninth District
Constituent Survey

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES '99

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